

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1.) Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claims 1, 6, 13, 18 and 21; claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 16, 17, and 24 have been canceled. Applicant respectfully submits no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 6-10, 13-15, and 18-23 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1, 6-8, 13, 18, 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by La Porta, *et al.* (US 5,509,010). In order to expedite allowance of this application, the Applicant has amended claims 1, 6, 13, 18 and 21 to better define the intended scope of the claimed invention. The Examiner's consideration of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

3.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

Claims 2-3, 9-10, 14-15, 19-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over La Porta, *et al.* (US 5,509,010) in view of Allen Jr, *et al.* (US 6,765,903). Claims 2-3, 9-10, 14-15, 19-20 depend from claims 1, 6, 13, 18 and 21 which the Applicant has amended. The Examiner's consideration of the rejected claims is respectfully requested.

4.) Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant notes with appreciation the conditional allowance of claims 4-5, 11-12, 16-17, and 24. As the Examiner has suggested, claims 1, 6, 13, 18 and 21 have been rewritten in independent form including all limitation of the base claims and any intervening claims. Therefore no amendments have been made to narrow the scope of the pending claims or to create any sort of estoppel.

Consequently, the Applicant believes claims 1, 6, 13, 18 and 21, as well as the claims that depend from them are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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